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# Wrong Time? Wrong Place? Wrong Side? The Confederate Prison System

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## Introduction

On 10 November 1865, the recently promoted Major Henry Hartman Wirz was hung for war crimes committed against the Federal prisoners in his charge at Camp Sumter (Andersonville) Military Prison. The trial of Captain Henry Wirz began on August 23, 1865 and lasted for 63 days. The prosecution and defense called over 140 witnesses during the trial. Lewis Schade led the defense. Colonel N. P. Chipman, Judge Advocate, represented the Federal government. Major General L. Wallace as Chairman headed the seven-member courts martial commission.[1]

There were two charges levied against Captain Wirz and he pleaded not guilty to both. The first charge was that Captain Wirz:

> maliciously, willfully, and traitorously [sic], and in the then existing armed rebellion against the United States of America, combining, confederating, and conspiring together with John H. Winder, Richard B. Winder, Joseph White, W.S. Winder, R.R. Stevenson and others unknown, to injure the health and destroy the lives of United States soldiers being held as prisoners of war within the lines of the Confederate States of America in military prisons in violations of the laws and customs of war.[2]

The second charge was for personally committing the murders of thirteen prisoners by shooting them.

The first charge included a number of specifications. Some of these were: holding over 40,000 prisoners in close confinement without the benefit of appropriate shelter, clothing, or sufficient food to sustain that body of prisoners; the use of bloodhounds to track escaped prisoners; and the construction and implementation of a "deadline."

The most damning testimony at Wirz's trial was from Confederate Surgeon, Dr. Joseph Jones. Jones was sent by the Confederate Surgeon General to Andersonville to inspect the stockade and to study the effects of the southern climate on the Union soldiers being held. He was specifically looking for cases of malarial diseases to study. In his testimony during Wirz's trial, Dr. Jones stated that, "[s]curvy, diarrhea, dysentery, and hospital gangrene were the prevailing diseases"[3] effecting the prisoners.

During the course of his testimony in 1865, he was asked if he had come to any conclusions about the stockade. Jones re-iterated his conclusions from the report, as follows:

> Finally, this gigantic mass of human misery calls loudly for relief, not only for the sake of suffering humanity, but also on account of our own brave soldiers now captive in the hands of the Federal Government. Strict justice to the gallant men of the Confederate Armies, who have been or who may be, so unfortunate as to be compelled to surrender in battle, demands that the Confederate Government should adopt that course which will best secure their health and comfort in captivity; or at least leave their enemies without a shadow of an excuse for any violation of the rules of civilized warfare in the treatment of prisoners.[4]

This conclusion from his 1864 report on Andersonville to the Confederate States Surgeon General was prophetic: Captain Wirz was later tried and convicted of "violations of the laws and customs of war." Jones' reports were forwarded to the Confederate States of America Surgeon General in 1864, but none of the problems that he reported were corrected. Why these corrections were not made is still a matter of debate. Was the Confederacy so low on resources that they couldn't be made; or were the corrections not made because

Captain Wirz did not think that they were important enough? The court martial decided this question in 1865 by finding Wirz guilty of charge one, including all of the specifications, and guilty of eleven of the thirteen charges of murder. The Commission, on October 2, 1865, sentenced him to be executed by hanging. Because Wirz was sentenced to death, President Andrew Johnson had to approve the order of execution.[5]

On November 3, 1865, President Johnson issued General Courts-martial Order Number 607. This order stated that the "sentence be carried into execution, by the officer commanding the Department of Washington, on Friday, the 10th of November, 1865, between the hours of 6 o'clock a.m. and 12 o'clock noon." At approximately 10:30 a.m., Henry Wirz was hung at the Old Capital Prison in Washington, D.C.[6]

Since the hanging of Captain Wirz in 1865, many historians and others have argued that this was an unjust trial, verdict, and sentence and that Wirz should not have been tried as the lone defendant in a case where a number of others were named in the charges. Was Wirz solely responsible for the deplorable conditions at Andersonville? Was he the only war criminal during the Civil War from the South or the North? Was Wirz in the wrong place at the wrong time? Did he symbolize all the Confederate evils perpetrated during the war? Statistically was the sentence just or unjust? Or, did the country just want to get to the business of rebuilding the nation? These questions, and many others, have yet to be answered.

## The System and its Leaders

Captain Wirz was not the only neglectful and cruel officer involved in the Confederate prison system during the Civil War. There were some who were arguably more neglectful and cruel than Wirz, who were in charge of Federal prisoners during the Civil War. Some of those people also were named in the conspiracy charge brought against Wirz at his courts martial. Ovid L. Futch, *History of Andersonville Prison*, argues that a large majority of the guilt should be placed on the Confederate government for not correcting the mismanagement problems throughout the prison system.[7] First, of course, there is Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy. Although his role was significantly limited, he should have been tried along with Wirz. He was held in prison until 1867, but was never tried. There is a fine line between criminal and political activity at the state, national or international level.[8] However, President Davis should have tried to correct the obvious problems within the prison system.

The South did not develop an organized prison system or name a commissary general until almost the end of 1864. Since the early prisoner of war facilities were centralized in Richmond and General John H. Winder was the Provost Marshal of that city, he was placed in charge of all Confederate military prisons, when Jefferson Davis named him as director.[9] Because this decision to place Winder in charge was made so late in the war, this reorganization had only a negligible effect on the prisoners being held.

Brigadier General John H. Winder was a West Point graduate who served in the US Army as a major in the artillery before he resigned his commission and

joined the Confederate Army. He was a rigid disciplinarian and won praise from his superiors but scorn from the citizens of Richmond, because they felt he was too strict with his charges. Many citizens of Richmond, who resented his harsh and strict rule, considered his methods high-handed and antagonistic.[10] Davis, who was Winder's direct supervisor, nevertheless, gave the general a very favorable appraisal. Daniel Patrick Brown in *The Tragedy of Libby and Andersonville Prison Camps*, argued that Davis made a point of paying tribute to Winder as a truly courageous, kind man. Davis also depicted Winder as free from the callous traits his critics accused him of possessing.[11] When reports of war crimes were considered during the war, Winder, as Provost Marshal, assumed unique and special culpability as the overseer of all Southern prisons.[12] Unfortunately for justice and the thousands who died in the prison camps, General Winder died before the end of the war while visiting the prison at Florence, North Carolina, so his exact role in the tragedy of the prisons was never determined.[13]

The prison keeper with the most infamous name was Captain Henry Wirz. Wirz was born in Zurich, Switzerland on November 25, 1823. Early in his life, while he was attending school in Zurich and Turin, Italy, Wirz was interested in pursuing the medical field. Between the years 1846 and 1849, Wirz ran into trouble with the law in Switzerland. No one is sure what that trouble was exactly. He served a brief prison term and the Swiss government banished him. In 1849 he sailed to America, stopping first in Lawrence, Massachusetts where he worked as a weaver.

In 1854, he moved to Kentucky and became a doctor's assistant. While living in Cadiz, Kentucky, Wirz married Elizabeth Wolfe on 28 May 1854. By 1861, Wirz was working, as a physician's assistant, on the Marshall Plantation in Milliken's Bend, Louisiana where he joined the Confederate army on June 16th of that year. As a sergeant in 1862, Wirz suffered a wound in his right arm, just above the wrist, during the 2-day Battle of Seven Pines beginning May 31 of 1862. On June 12 that year, he was promoted to Captain and assigned as acting adjutant general to General John H. Winder.

Upon Wirz's commission, Winder assigned him to command the military prison at Richmond, Virginia in late August, 1862. Winder subsequently gave Wirz the command of the prison at Tuscaloosa, Alabama. On December 19, 1862, Jefferson Davis sent Wirz to Paris and Berlin to recruit support for the Confederate cause. Wirz returned from Europe in February 1864, when Winder assigned him to command the interior prison at Andersonville on March 27, 1864. He remained in command at Andersonville until the prison closed in late April 1865.[14]

## Prison Categories and Their Commandants

The types of prisons used during the Civil War had a direct correlation with mortality rates, especially in the South. The poor quality and quantity of limited rations and shelter available or, in many cases, unavailable to the prisoners, often made prison life a living hell on earth for thousands of soldiers. Exposure to the elements, lack of sanitation, and poor rations increased mortality rates associated with prisons such as Andersonville, Florence, and Salisbury. During the American Civil War, there were more than 150 prisoner-of-war camps located

across the country for both the North and the South. Out of these, only two were "tolerable," according to the prisoners held there: Fort Warren in the North and Raleigh Barracks in the South. Lonnie Speer in *Portals to Hell* describes seven categories of prisons: existing jails and prisons, coastal fortifications, old buildings converted into prisons, barracks enclosed by high fences, clusters of tents surrounded by high fences, barren stockades, and barren ground.[15]

Existing jails and prisons were the first prisons both sides used at the beginning of the war. Examples of small prisons include Selma, Alabama and Tombs Prison in New York; medium facilities included Parish Prison in New Orleans and Henrico County Jail in Richmond; large prisons were located in Columbus, Ohio, Huntsville, Texas, and Western Penitentiary in Allegheny, Pennsylvania.

Coastal fortifications along the Atlantic seacoast included Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Fort Warren in Boston, and Fort Delaware located south of Philadelphia. The only coastal fort used in the South was Castle Pinckney in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. Prisons used that consisted of old buildings that were converted into prisons during the war were used primarily in the South. Examples here include Libby Prison in Richmond, Castle Thunder in Petersburg, and six tobacco warehouses in Danville, Virginia.

Libby Prison in Richmond is notable because the commandant there also did not fare well in the opinions of prisoners. Witnesses alleged that Major Thomas Turner, while commanding at Libby Prison, withheld rations as punishment and kicked and whipped sick prisoners, among other things. One

event took place at Libby that stood out over all the other atrocities Turner committed. After a large escape in 1864, in which 109 prisoners escaped, Turner placed 200 pounds of powder in the basement of the prison. Once this was done, he informed the prisoners that if they made any further attempt to break out, he would blow up the entire prison along with everyone in it.[16] This action was never taken and Turner was never tried for war crimes.

The diary of General Neal Dow sheds light on the situation confronting Union Prisoners of War at Libby and elsewhere in the Confederacy during the Civil War. Dow was captured on 30 June 1863 at Port Hudsen, Louisiana. He was only one of a few Union generals to enter Southern prisons as a captive. By the end of winter in 1864, the Southerners had convinced him that they were deliberately torturing the helpless victims in their charge.[17] Dow's diary contains a number of hard facts about the treatment he and others suffered at the hands of the Confederacy in Libby Prison. On 27 February 1864 he wrote in his diary that "[e]verything done here, is calculated, and we believe, intended to annoy us and make us suffer."[18] Before his death in 1897, General Dow, a prisoner at Libby Prison in Richmond, stated that he had "suffered few discomforts that could have been reasonably avoided" by his jailers.[19]

In contrast with Turner, Lieutenant Colonel Robert C. Smith, who was the commandant of Danville Prisons in Virginia, reportedly was a sympathetic man who would not voluntarily inflict any unnecessary hardships upon those under his charge. Danville was located 143 miles southwest of Richmond and four miles north of the North Carolina state line. Danville consisted of six tobacco and

cotton warehouses and housed Federal officers. Many of those officers were transferred from Libby Prison when the Federal Army began to approach Richmond. On 17 November 1863 Danville received four thousand prisoners Libby and other Richmond area prisons.[20]

Clusters of tents that were enclosed by high fences were one of the cheapest methods of holding prisoners and were used in both the North and the South. Examples of this type include Point Lookout in Maryland and Belle Isle in Richmond, Virginia. Belle Isle Prison was located on an island in the James River near Richmond. It consisted of six acres of land and could be seen from Libby Prison. It came into operation in 1861 and was in and out of service throughout the war. Belle Isle's commandant was Lieutenant Virginius Bossieux, a native of France. While commanding at Belle Isle, Bossieux showed criminal indifference for the comfort and well being of the prisoners in his charge. He was callously unconcerned with whether the prisoners lived or died on the island. Bossieux had two sergeants acting as his assistants who prisoners considered very cruel and viewed with dread and terror. Bossieux often withheld rations for punishment, such as when a prisoner stole a chicken that had wondered into the stockade and ate it to satisfy his hunger. Because of this, rations were withheld from all of the prisoners in the camp for the day.[21]

Barren stockades were the cheapest way to hold prisoners and were used exclusively in the South. These prisons usually were not provided with any shelters, except what the prisoners themselves could construct. Examples of this type included Camp Asylum and Florence in South Carolina, Andersonville in

Georgia, Salisbury in North Carolina, Camp Ford in Texas, and Cahaba Prison in Alabama.

The barren-stockade prison in Florence, North Carolina, commanded by Lieutenant Thomas G. Barrett, came into service when Andersonville was temporarily evacuated because of the threat from General William Tecumseh Sherman in September, 1864. By mid-October, 13,000 prisoners were located at Florence. This prison was nothing more than a smaller version of Andersonville. It was hastily erected on 23.5 acres of land. Six of those acres were not inhabitable because of a swampy marshland on both sides of a small stream located in the middle of the prison. Florence's commandant was considered to be the "most brutal fool I ever met... On the least provocation he would become so enraged that he would stamp and swear" at everyone near him. Frederick Augustus James, a prisoner at Andersonville moved to Florence, wrote in his diary about Barrett that "[i]t seemed a greater wretch never lived. Captain Wirz surpassed him in cruel inventions to enhance our misery, but he did not equal him in coarse brutality... [Barrett] delighted in drawing his pistol and firing it over the heads of the crowd."[22] Many prisoners stated that Barrett was "the most cruel man we ever came in contact with." Barrett allegedly would shoot into squads of men and knock down and kick the life out of others.[23] Yet this man was never tried for war crimes against Federal troops.

The barren-stockade prison at Salisbury was located on the site of an old cotton factory in North Carolina. The first prisoners arrived at Salisbury from Richmond on 12 December 1861. The commandant was Captain A. C. Godwin.

Godwin reportedly showed compassion for the prisoners and was well liked. This prison was unique in a number of ways. The population consisted of Union prisoners (both officers and enlisted men), Confederate military convicts and prisoners of the state of the Confederated States of America, such as a reporter from the *New York Tribune*. Salisbury also consisted of both converted buildings (one cotton warehouse and six small cottages) and a barren stockade. Finally, the prisoners had the opportunity to trade with local townspeople when they went outside the stockade to get water and wood.

In September 1864, Major John H. Gee took command at Salisbury and the situation at the prison deteriorated because of his reported lack of concern towards the prisoners. By 31 October 1864, Salisbury was the home to 10,321 prisoners that consisted of officers and enlisted men. Salisbury was evacuated of all those strong enough to leave on 22 February 1865. Of 2,800 prisoners who started the walk towards Raleigh (51 miles away) only about 1,800 arrived there. The rest were either left by the road, died, or were left at other Confederate facilities.[24]

When the Confederacy appropriated a cotton warehouse, later called Cahaba Prison, in Alabama in January 1864, it was a roofless, unfinished building. By the end of March, 1864, there were 660 prisoners in the prison. This number eventually raised to a total of 3,000 men. The commandant for this prison was Lieutenant Colonel Samuel S. Jones. He was intensely disliked by the prisoners because of his allegedly cruel acts of inhumanity. In March 1865,

Cahaba flooded badly. The prisoners were evacuated but not before some of them drowned. Ten days after the flood, Cahaba was permanently closed.[25]

Other prisons that were used during the war were barren ground prisons and barracks that were enclosed by high fences. Barren ground prisons were simply a gathering of prisoners of war surrounded by a guard line. Using crossed sticks, branches, or several batteries of cannon directed at the prisoners usually delineated the outer limits. Sentries were posted along the outside of the gathering at intervals. This type of prison was used mostly in the South late in the war and sometimes in the North after a major battle. Barren ground prisons were usually used as temporary holding areas until the prisoners could be transported to permanent facilities. Examples would include Camp Sorghum in South Carolina, Charlotte in North Carolina, and East Point outside of Atlanta, Georgia. Barracks enclosed by high fences were usually converted basic-training facilities or rendezvous points for troops going to war. These were used mainly in the North and included Elmira in New York, Camp Chase in Columbus, Ohio, Camp Douglas in Chicago, and Camp Morton in Indianapolis. There were two of this type located in the South at Raleigh, North Carolina and Macon, Georgia.[26]

## Rations

Along with the several categories of prisons used, the small quantity and poor quality of the rations issued to prisoners also contributed to major outbreaks of, normally, avoidable diseases. Chronic and acute diarrhea was the most prevalent cause of death, with scurvy coming in a close second. Both of these

diseases could have been avoided by issuing clean drinking water and a variety of fresh vegetables to the prisoners.

Rations issued during the Civil War were, in general, fairly good at the outset of the war. However, as the war continued, the South became more effected by the Union blockade and sources of food began to diminish both in quantity and quality. After Union victories during the summer of 1863, the food situation only worsened for Union prisoners and Confederate soldiers in the South.[27] The meager quantity and quality of rations at Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia contributed to the semi-starvation of the inhabitants. This was not, necessarily, willful intent to deny the prisoners nourishment; it may also have been a consequence of the Confederacy's inability to maintain a good source of food as the war progressed.[28] General Neal Dow, a Union officer held prisoner at Libby Prison stated in his diary on 1 March 1863 that "[r]ations of the 'cow pea' continued to be served out occasionally [along with the regular cornmeal or cornbread]...instead of meat...they are old and full of worms."[29] Although the cow-pea may be a good substitute for protein, the small quantity and poor quality of this substitute was inadequate for the health of the prisoners being held.

Rations at other prisons also deteriorated in the later years of the war. At Andersonville, "they cursed the rations..." because of the meager portions of cornbread or raw cornmeal that they had to cook themselves.[30] At Danville in Virginia in the beginning, the prisoners received black bread (from ground sorghum cane) and coffee made from burning rye. Eventually, however, they were reduced to 1-1/2 lbs. of cornbread per day. By January, 1865 the prisoners

received nothing but cornbread. Cahaba, Salisbury, and Florence rations were reduced in like manner as time passed.[31] In November 1864, Frederick Augustus James wrote in his diary that "[a]t this time, our comrades in prison were only getting a pint of coarse corn meal, with the smallest modicum of salt occasionally."[32]

## Shelter

Along with meager rations, the lack of shelter added to the prisoners suffering and mortality rates. The Confederacy was unwilling and unable, in some cases, to provide their prisoners with adequate shelter. As the prisoners were continuously exposed to the elements in the Southern states, they had to devise their own shelter by using excess clothing, tent halves, and, in many places, by digging caves into the earth to give them some type of protection.

The lack of shelter in many of the Confederacy's prisons was a contributing factor to the large mortality rate that occurred. In prisons such as Libby, shelter was not a main concern, except where sanitation was concerned, because it was a converted warehouse providing the prisoners with overhead protection from the elements. Libby was a 3-story building, which was originally used for enlisted men and for officers of the Union Army. Because of over crowding, however, the enlisted men were moved to Belle Isle in the James River in Richmond. The main problems at Libby were inadequate ventilation, which did not allow for acceptable airflow through the prison, and windows without windowpanes, allowing cold winds to blow through the prison in winter.[33]

Danville Prison consisted of six brick buildings (tobacco and cotton warehouses), so shelter was not a problem there. Salisbury Prison, in North Carolina, was a mixture of buildings and barren ground. This prison had a four-story brick building along with six small cottages that housed enlisted men and officers. By 1864, however, these buildings were overflowing and nearly 50 percent of the prisoners were without shelter on the barren ground within the stockade area. The Confederacy failed to supply tents, and during the winter of 1863-64, lack of shelter caused many prisoners at Salisbury to freeze to death while they slept outside on the ground.[34]

Barren stockades were the worst category of prisons to be held in when it came to shelter. When the enlisted men first were moved to Belle Isle, they dug holes in the ground for shelter against the elements of the Virginia climate. Some tents were provided to the prisoners; however, they were rotten and full of holes. By November 1863, about one-half of the 6,000 prisoners being held on the island were without shelter of any kind.[35]

At Andersonville, the first task facing a new arrival was the construction of a hut or shebang (as the prisoners called it). This was necessary if they were to have any protection from the heat, frost, and rain of the Georgia climate. Prisoners spent a great deal of time repairing individual huts after hard rains. Some prisoners would purposely tear their shebangs down and rebuild them in a better, or different, layout simply for something to do.[36] At Florence, the prisoners were gathered in a clearing, and the stockade was built around them.

The tops and refuse of the timber used to construct the walls provided prisoners with building materials for their shelters.[37]

## Available Resources

The resources available to the Confederacy during the Civil War declined steadily from beginning to end. The South's ability to simultaneously procure the necessities for its army, the Union prisoners of war, and its citizens was hampered by the Union naval blockade. Both sides viewed the blockade, at least in part, as a hazard of war. The ineffective administration of the Confederacy for distributing supplies that got through was greatly flawed. William Hesseltine's, *Civil War Prisons,* argues the "atrocities of the prison camps were only phases of the greater atrocity of war itself."[38]

Speer argues that the Confederacy was trying to develop a centralized prison system within the Richmond area; however, they simply did not have the resources to feed, clothe, and shelter the large number of prisoners they quickly acquired. Therefore, the conditions in Southern prisons deteriorated rapidly throughout the war.[39] Richmond had two main logistical problems concerning the prisoners they held. The Union blockade made it nearly impossible to import anything into the South from Europe or other locations, making everything cost hundreds of times more than it normally would, if they could get it. The blockade also made it hard for the South to obtain rations, not only for their prisoners, but also for their own forces. Southerners had to rely on their own ingenuity and their ability to produce what they needed. However, with a main cause of the war being individual state's rights, having a centralized government tell them what to

do and how to do it, did not set well with some state governments. The additional costs of obtaining clothing, food, and shelter for anybody put a strain on the Confederacy. [40]

Prisoners were not even able to get packages sent from home, that the humanitarian aid program of the Sanitary Commission expressly sent from the North for prisoner use. On 24 February 1864, Dow wrote "[y]esterday, an officer sent out ten dollars to buy a pair of drawers. When they came they were stamped 'Sanitary Commission'! We have long believed that the flour, beans, hams, and other provisions sold to us, were goods sent to us by the Sanitary Commission and this confirms our suspicions..."[41] This reportedly occurred all over the South. Parcels of clothing and packages of food were sent to the prisons but, according to the testimony of Ambrose Spencer, General John H. Winder, Provost Marshal of the prisons, as well as Sid Winder (his son), were adamant about having no provisions brought to the Yankees and that no shelter be provided for them.[42]

As the war progressed and Union forces advanced on Richmond where the Confederate High Command was located, prison officials became increasingly eager to remove as many of the Federal prisoners from the capital as possible, thus making the city less vulnerable to an attack to free Union prisoners. General Robert E. Lee made this decision on October 28, 1863. His decision to remove prisoners of war from Richmond was based on five main reasons:

(1) large numbers of prisoners in the city were injurious to the citizens and the prisoners;

(2) the presence of the prisoners increased the strain on transportation;
(3) the prisoners presence increased the prices in local markets;
(4) the numbers of prisoners made Richmond vulnerable to attack; and
(5) the Union had already made arrangements for permanent prisons for Confederate prisoners of war (something the South had yet to do).[43]

At this point in 1864, prisoners were removed from Belle Isle and Libby Prisons to other, more remote locations throughout the South. Most of the officers from Libby were sent to Danville, Virginia, and most of the prisoners at Belle Isle were sent to a new prison near Americus, Georgia. Andersonville, the prison, located in that vicinity, had easy access to ample local resources, if the administrators of the prison had wished to procure them. Andersonville, by sheer numbers of prisoners (both the dead and the number housed in the prison), was the worst of the Confederate prisoner of war camps. The prison was located in Sumter County, Georgia, a few miles east of Andersonville in the middle of a large Georgia pine forest. Officially, the camp was called Fort Sumter Confederate Military Prison; however, because of its proximity to the town of Andersonville, the fort and stockade were soon referred to only as Andersonville.

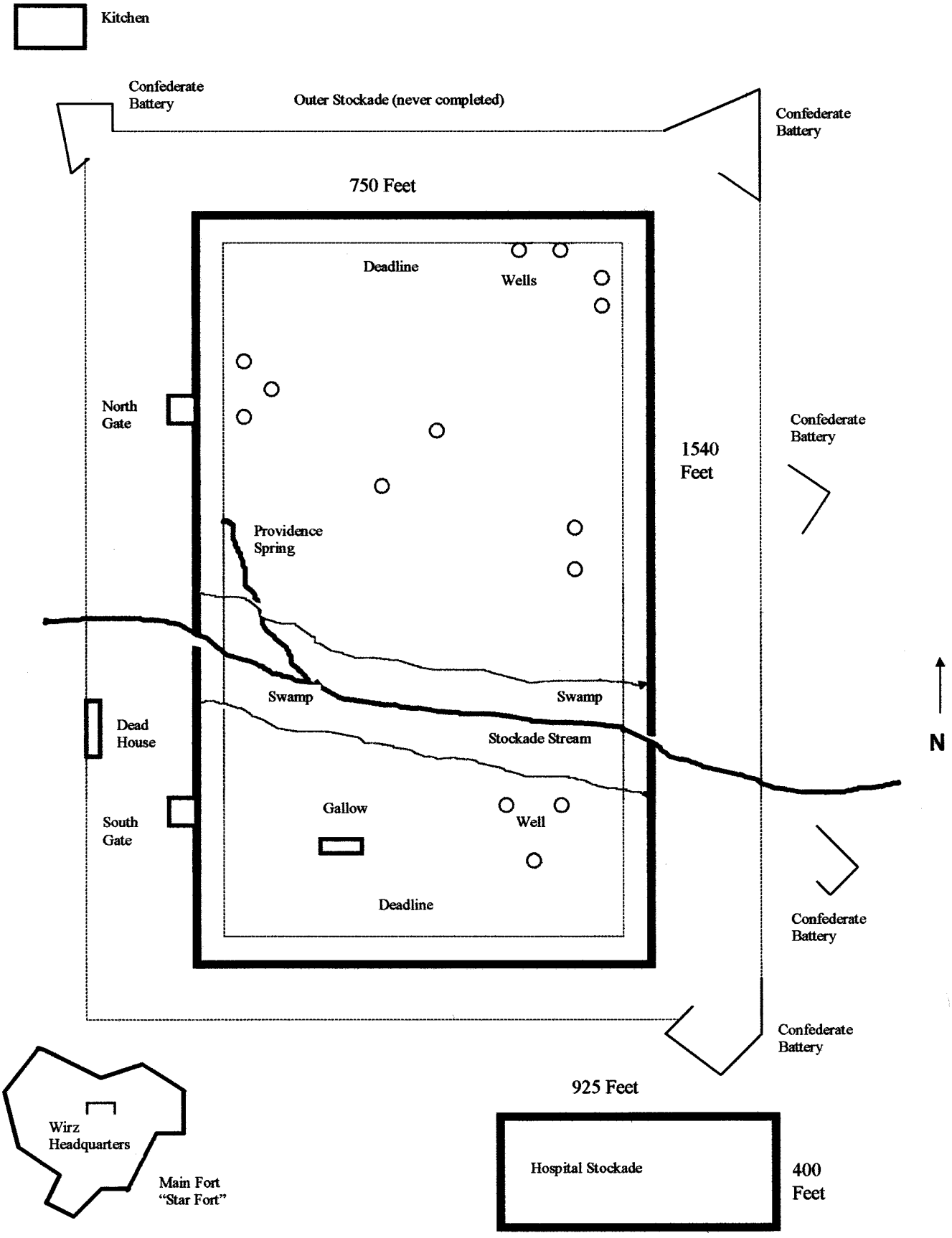
## Andersonville Description

Andersonville Prison in Sumter County, Georgia was the worst of the Confederate military prisons. Andersonville, by sheer numbers, surpassed all other prisons in the number of prisoners held and the number of prisoner deaths. This prison held up to three times, on average, the number held by other prisons in the South. Over 45,000 prisoners passed through its gates and almost 13,000 of those died as a result of the conditions at the Andersonville stockade.

Prisoners at the new prison at Andersonville suffered from a high mortality rate compared to all other prisons. The relatively small dimension, location, and geography of the prison (See figure 1), coupled with an unusually large population, made survival very difficult for a large number of those Union soldiers confined in the pen. The main stockade measured 750 feet (east to west) and 1,540 feet (north to south) which totaled approximately 26.5 acres. A branch of Sweetwater Creek flowed west to east through the stockade. Along this stream, on either side, was a wide strip of low and boggy land. This swampy area reduced the livable space within the stockade, because excrement, deposited by the prisoners on the banks, was up to eighteen inches thick. The area was alive with maggots and other disease-carrying vermin. Because of the complete lack of sanitation facilities, the water in the stream, which was already insufficient for the number of prisoners being held, was completely unusable. A prisoner who drank this water most certainly became ill, and usually died. The ground inside the walls was mostly composed of sand and clay. This type of soil made it easier for the inmates to dig wells in an attempt to obtain good drinking water, caves for shelter, and, eventually, tunnels for escape. The grounds comprised opposing hillsides reaching from the swamp up to the stockade walls on both sides of the creek.[44]

The prisoners had to survive in this small, confined area as best they could. Most of their rations consisted of a small amount of coarse cornmeal with no salt, and, on occasion, a small piece of some kind of meat, usually rancid.

Figure 1: MAP OF ANDERSONVILLE CONFEDERATE MILITARY PRISON
ANDERSONVILLE, GA. (120 MILES SOUTHWEST OF ATLANTA)




Source: N. P. Chipman, *The Tragedy of Andersonville: Trial of Captain Henry Wirz, The Prison Keeper* (San Francisco: Chipman, 1911), 57.

Some of these rations were raw when provided to the prisoners and there were no cooking utensils or fuel for cooking fires.[45]

## Deadlines

Union and Confederate prisons commonly featured what prisoners and prison administrations termed "deadlines." These lines were marked in different ways depending on the prison category. They were also considered a "free-fire zone" by prison guards. If a prisoner were to cross the "deadline," the guards were instructed to shoot to kill. The rumor circulated around the prisoners that any guard shooting a prisoner would receive a 30-day furlough. However, no surviving administrative evidence supports this rumor. Many prisoners, after being confined for long periods of time, purposely crossed the deadline as a sure way to commit suicide and the guards appeared to be happy to accommodate the prisoners in this way.

The "deadline" issue in the Confederate prison system attracted a lot of attention from the press in the North. The press called it inhuman even though the Northern prisons also employed a "deadline" at their prisons. The purpose of the deadline was to restrict prisoner movement around the walls of the prisons. If a prisoner crossed this line (in some cases, even that was not necessary), a sentry would immediately shoot them. This line of death took many forms within different prisons in the South. At Libby Prison, the windows of the building delineated the "deadline". On 1 March 1864, General Dow wrote in his diary: "This morning an order from Major Turner was read that no clothes must be hung out to dry or air, under penalty of confiscation, and no one must go to a window

under penalty of being shot."[46] The deadline at Danville was similar to Libby's, [47] but at Belle Isle, the deadline took the form of earth pushed up into a mound approximately 3 feet high and 6 feet across.[48] At Florence, the deadline was the opposite of Belle Isle: A trench was dug around the interior of the prison about 15 to 16 feet from the stockade wall. Later, thin poles were laid in wooden crotches along the edge of the trench to make it more visible.[49]

Many of the prisons included a type of fence erected to serve as the "deadline." At the Columbia, South Carolina clearing, pins or stakes, about 15 inches in height and 30 feet apart were pounded into the ground to serve as a deadline.[50] At Macon, Georgia, the line was delineated by an ordinary picket fence about 3-1/2 feet high, 16 feet from the exterior wall.[51]

The most infamous of the deadlines in Southern prisons was the one at Andersonville, because of the number of shootings and because of the infamous celebrity of Captain Wirz. The erratic actions of the Georgia Reserves, who were the guards at the prison, added to the notoriety of the Andersonville deadline at this prison. These guards were usually either too old or too young to fight in the war. The large number of killings at the deadline tragically underscored the ineffectiveness of these guards.[52]

Wirz complained to Richmond about the Georgia Reserve Corps, whose duty it was to guard the prisoners at Andersonville. The regular army was called to protect the areas of Columbus and Atlanta against the onslaught of General Sherman in mid-1864. The reserve corps that remained was commanded by

Brigadier General Howell Cobb and consisted of the least disciplined soldiers in the Confederate army, according to Wirz and Captain Sid Winder.

The reserves lost their good, experienced officers because of the Confederate War Departments, order to conscript these officers and send them to the field. This left the reserves disorganized and lacking good leadership. The ages of these soldiers ranged from 10 to 75, and were reportedly a trigger-happy lot. After the deadline was instituted in June, 1864, incidents of shootings rose dramatically. According to some guards, a good portion of those prisoners shot for being across the deadline, were, in fact, still on their own side when shot.

Wirz once complained to Richmond that the "carelessness and inefficiency" of his guards was causing more problems with the prisoners than warranted and he argued such problems could be avoided. He also mentioned that the "worthlessness" of these reserves was gaining every day. Because of this reported lack of discipline, John Winder told Richmond, and therefore Davis, that he could not depend on the Reserves to do their duty if an emergency arose. This was evident in the number of desertions that occurred (twelve in one night).

The deadline, located twenty feet from the interior wall, which further decreased the dimensions of the prison with a no-man's land around the perimeter of the stockade.[53] The deadline was instituted by order of Captain Wirz to prevent any rushes on the walls of the stockade. The following order was issued on June 10, 1864:

> Not wishing to shed the blood of hundreds not connected with those who concocted a plan to force the stockade, and make in this way their escape. I hereby warn the leaders and those who formed themselves into a band to carry out this, that I am in possession of all the facts, and

have made my arrangements accordingly, so to frustrate it. No choice would be left me but to open with grape and canister on the stockade, and what effect this would have on this densely crowded place need not be told.

Signed

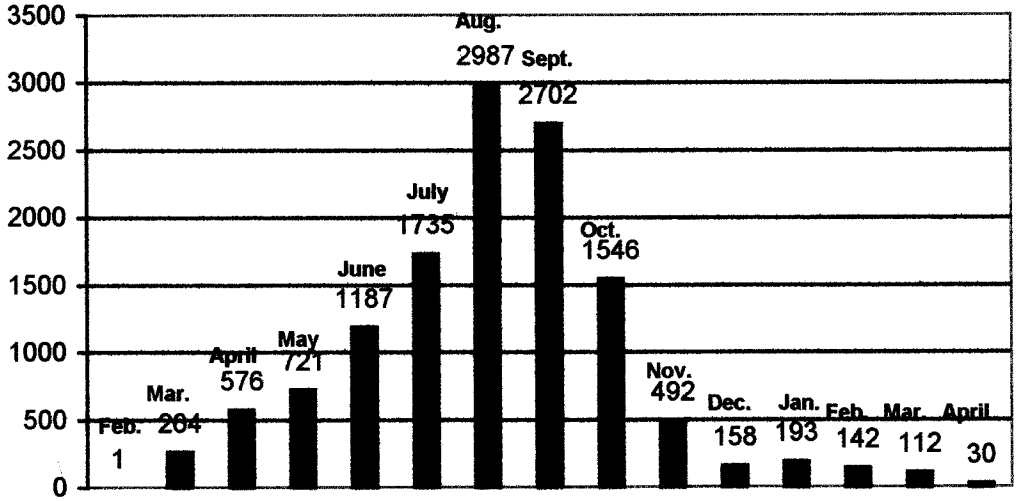
June 10, 1864 H. Wirz

The plan that Wirz refers to in this order was to tunnel up to the inner stockade wall. At this point, the ground under the wall would be undermined so that when the prisoners were ready, they could storm the wall and easily collapse that section of the wall creating a large gap in the stockade. When this was accomplished, the rest of the prisoners could rush through the gap and gain their freedom. However, due to the large number of "tunnel traitors"[54] within the stockade, Wirz soon discovered the plot and erected the deadline.[55]

## Death Rates

The number of Union and Confederate prisoners of war who died during the Civil War is approximately 56,000.[56] Adjutant General F.C. Ainsworth, in 1903, gave an estimate of the number of prisoners held on both sides during the

**Figure 2: Monthly number of deaths from February 1864 - April 1865**
**Source: N.P. Chipman, The Tragedy of Andersonville: Trial of Captain Henry Wirz, The Prison Keeper (San Francisco: Chipman, 1911), 373.**



war as 193,743 Union officers and men held and 214,865 Confederate officers and men held.[57] Of these, 408,608 prisoners, 30,218 Union soldiers and 25,796 Confederate soldiers died (a total of 56,014).[58] This equals to approximately 13.7 percent of all prisoners (North and South) who died in Civil War prisons. The biggest problem with these statistics is that they do not take into account those who died "as a result of their confinement soon after returning home." They also do not account for those who died while being transferred to other prisons, or those who died while on their way home. If you were to include these statistics (of which, there are no real estimates), the number of deaths might be substantially higher.[59]

Barren ground and stockade prisons had the highest rates of mortality. One of the main reasons for this is that the prisoners were exposed to the elements on a constant basis as opposed to the buildings used in prisons such as Libby and Danville.[60] Increased mortality rates because of being exposed to the hot days, chilling nights, and freezing rains are evident when looking at the monthly death rates at Andersonville Prison (see figure 2). As the climate got colder in the winters, or hotter in the summers, the death rates climbed.[61]

Confederate prison keepers, unfortunately and in general, did not keep accurate records for those who died while held prisoner in the South. However, for Andersonville, we do have an incredibly accurate and detailed account for the 12,912[62] men buried in the national cemetery located in Andersonville. From these records, causes of death, states of origin, daily death tolls, and numerous other items can be brought to light.[63]

A large number of the deaths from disease throughout the Confederate prison system were the result of chronic or acute diarrhea, scurvy, dysentery, and gangrene.[64] Between 1863 and the end of the war diarrhea and dysentery killed more prisoners "than the actual absence of food."[65] Using Andersonville as the example, we can break this down into meaningful statistics. Table 1 represents some of the leading causes of death at Andersonville due to disease. As shown, more than 4,800 (37 percent) Union prisoners died from acute or chronic diarrhea. Another 3,574 (27 percent) died from scurvy. Noting the deaths due to sunstroke, pneumonia, bronchitis, and rheumatism may approximate a representation of deaths due to exposure to the elements. Of those prisoners admitted to the hospital at Andersonville, the rate of mortality was a staggering 75 per cent because of the lack of medication throughout the South.[66]

The following tables provide some context for understanding the enormity of the mass suffering of prisoners of war during the Civil War. Table 2 shows the total number of deaths at Andersonville, according to a soldier's state of origin. Table 3 gives the monthly population of prisoners at Andersonville.[67]

**Table 1: Ten causes of deaths in Confederate Prisons**

| Disease: | Deaths: | Disease: | Deaths: |
|---|---|---|---|
| Diarrhea: | 4,817 | Pneumonia: | 321 |
| Scurvy: | 3,574 | Gunshot Wounds: | 155 |
| Dysentery: | 1,384 | Bronchitis: | 93 |
| Gangrene: | 678 | Rheumatism: | 83 |
| Unknown: | 443 | Sunstroke: | 52 |

**Table 2: Deaths by state of origin**

| State: | Total: | State: | Total: | State: | Total: | State: | Total: |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alabama | 15 | Kansas | 5 | Michigan | 630 | Penn. | 1811 |
| Conn. | 315 | Kentucky | 436 | Missouri | 97 | Rhode Island | 74 |
| Delaware | 45 | Louisiana | 1 | New Hampshire | 124 | Tennessee | 738 |
| Wash. D.C. | 14 | Maine | 233 | New Jersey | 170 | Vermont | 212 |
| Illinois | 850 | Maryland | 194 | New York | 2572 | Virginia | 288 |
| Indiana | 504 | Mass. | 768 | North Carolina | 17 | Wisconsin | 244 |
| Iowa | 174 | Minnesota | 79 | Ohio | 1030 | | |

**Table 3: Andersonville Populations by month**

| Date: | Population: | Date: | Population: |
|---|---|---|---|
| April, 1864 | 10,427 | Nov., 1864 | 1,359 |
| May, 1864 | 13,454 | Dec., 1864 | 4,706 |
| June, 1864 | 23,307 | Jan., 1865 | 5,046 |
| July, 1864 | 31,678 | Feb., 1865 | 5,851 |
| Aug., 1864 | 31,693 | Mar., 1865 | 3,319 |
| Sept., 1864 | 8,218 | April, 1865 | 51 |
| Oct., 1864 | 4,208 | | |

The death rates at other Confederate prisons were proportionately smaller than those at Andersonville. This is because the number of prisoners held at Andersonville was approximately, on average, three times the number held in other prisons. Because there were no official records of deaths in many of the prisons, the numbers for these must be estimated. At Florence Prison, in South Carolina, between the months of September 1864 and January 1865, at least 2,802 prisoners died.[68] According to Frederick Augustus James' diary the deaths at Florence "amounted to 12 per cent per month of the whole number."[69] This is far higher than the average of 8.8 percent monthly rate at Andersonville. At Danville, by January 1864, 139 Union officers died and the 3 prison hospitals were severely over-crowded. Between November, 1864 and January, 1865 there had been 416 deaths, averaging 5 per day caused "no doubt by the insufficiency of food."[70] Cahaba Prison in Alabama was plagued by lice, rats,

and maggots (as were most of the other prisons) which resulted in 225 deaths by the time it was closed due to flooding in early 1865.[71]

Salisbury Prison, in North Carolina, suffered 526 deaths during one 8-day period due to extreme cold and sickness during the winter of 1863-64. Here again there are no official records, but between December 12, 1861 and April 21, 1862, it is estimated, according to witnesses and the few, incomplete records that exist, that only 5 deaths occurred. This is because the population had not swelled into the thousands yet and those who were there at this time had adequate food and shelter.[72] Libby Prison in Richmond, as stated earlier, housed Union officers who had adequate shelter and, therefore, did not suffer many deaths before most of the prisoners were transferred to Danville. Another reason Libby suffered fewer deaths was that it was originally used as a transitory prison. Libby was usually only a brief stop for Union soldiers and officers until they were transferred to other prisons.[73]

## Other War Criminals

The notoriety of the Wirz trial of 1865 was due to the amount of press exposure that it received. During the trial, almost on a daily basis, the *New York Times* ran some kind of story on the proceedings. These articles were, usually, just a chronicle of the defense of Wirz and the prosecution's answer to that defense. However, there were other war criminals who did not receive the amount of coverage in the press that Wirz did. Captain Wirz was not the only person tried, convicted, and executed for war crimes during or after the Civil War. He was actually the third. The first to be executed was Captain John Beall, the

Union commandant of Johnson's Island Prison in Ohio. Beall was tried for his part in the *Philo Parsons* scheme. This scheme was a planned release of all Confederate prisoners at Johnson's Island. He was convicted of conspiracy and hung on February 24, 1865.[74] The second execution for war crimes occurred on October 25, 1865, when Confederate Captain Champ Ferguson was hung. Ferguson was tried and convicted of murdering black Union prisoners after the battle at Saltville. He was hung while a detachment of black soldiers looked on.[75] The last Federal trial on war crimes during the Civil War was held after Wirz was hung in November, 1865. This was the trial of Major John Gee, who was the commandant at Salisbury Prison in North Carolina. Gee, tried by a military commission in February 1866, was charged with cruelty and conspiracy while commandant at Salisbury. However, "the wrath of the victors had begun to subside" by then and he was acquitted of all charges.[76]

A large number of Confederate officers, to include Sidney and Richard Winder, Iverson, Barrett, Vowles, and others (all associated with Confederate prisons), were arrested and held in places such as Libby Prison. However, none of those arrested were tried for war crimes (except Gee) and most were released by mid-1866. Others who were held included Jefferson Davis, James Seddon, Howell Cobb, and Alexander Stephens. Seddon, Cobb, and Stephens were released from prison after several months and Davis was released, without standing trial, in May 1867.[77]

These men should have been tried on an individual basis to determine their culpability associated with the tragedies of Confederate Prisoner of War

Camps. Since they were released without trials, one could come to the conclusion that the country wanted to get back to the business at hand, which was rebuilding the country as a whole again. Also, since these men were never tried, the questions concerning the Confederate ability and lack of concern for prisoners of war will never be answered completely.

## Conclusion

In early 1865, with the war coming to a close, Union officials (Lincoln, Grant, the Secretary of War, etc.) agreed to a general exchange and thousands of prisoners for the North and South were exchanged.[78] With this exchange, many Union soldiers, officers, and citizens saw, for the first time, the physical devastation of Union prisoners of war. With the return of the "walking skeletons," who used to be strong, able-bodied, Union soldiers, a spirit of revenge swept over the Union consciousness. This, coupled with the assassination of Abraham Lincoln in April, 1865, was the signature on Henry Wirz's death sentence.

In possession of statements from the surviving thousands from Andersonville, Wirz was arrested, tried, convicted, and hung by the Federal government on November 10, 1865. One witness' testimony at the trial seems to speak for those who could no longer speak for themselves. In his testimony, Dorence Atwater, who was a prisoner assigned to the hospital stockade at Andersonville, spoke of the mortality rate:

> The appalling mortality was such that I suspected that it was the design of the Rebel government to kill and maim our prisoners by exposure and starvation so that they would forever be totally unfit for military service and that they [the Confederates] withheld these facts.[79]

Armed with such statements, even though the statistics do not prove that the mortality rates were higher at Andersonville, could there be any other verdict than guilty? Probably not. However, though Wirz was found guilty (as he should have been), the mismanagement and cruelty to prisoners of war exhibited in both the North and South, should not have been blamed on any single individual. This is exhibited by the following argument from Speer:

> If there was the ability to put up stockade walls two or three rows thick; if areas could be expanded from 16-1/2 acres to 26-1/2 when authorities decided to do so; and when more than 10,000 men could be quickly evacuated...then it would seem that adequate food and shelter could have been provided as well, had there been a sincere effort.[80]

Some questions concerning prisoner of war camps during the Civil War may never be answered to the satisfaction of all. In the end, only those that were there can say for sure what really happened in the prisons of the Civil War. Unfortunately for the historian, those men are no longer able to speak about their experiences. The devastation that occurred at these camps was a tragedy which may have been avoided by providing the prisoners with better rations, medical treatment, and shelter. Had the Confederacy been able to put men in charge who would not mismanage the prisons, and had those commanders been given access to guards other than those who were unable to serve elsewhere, maybe the camps would have had fewer mortalities. Had the South been able to organize the prison system sooner, they could have avoided many of the problems that existed, or at least, lessened the suffering of those in their charge.

In effect, Captain Wirz made two errors during the last year of the Civil War: he remained in the vicinity of Andersonville at the close of the war and he

kept extremely accurate and detailed record. Both of these mistakes contributed greatly to his conviction and execution for war crimes. Many of the items Wirz was charged with, especially in the first charge, were not under his control. For instance, he did not choose the sight of Andersonville; he did not control Confederate supply lines; he did not have control over the large numbers of prisoners sent to Andersonville; Wirz did not control the weather; he did not or could not even control his guard force. In short, there were many things that Wirz did not or could not control where the blame was placed squarely on his shoulders.

It has been agreed that the number of deaths at Andersonville is an appalling reality. However, looking at the numbers statistically sheds new light on the entire situation. Of the 12,912 prisoners who died at Andersonville, 65 percent of them died from diarrhea and scurvy. These two diseases represent the lack of clean, fresh water and fresh vegetables and fruit, neither of which were under the general control of Captain Wirz. Of the other 35 percent, 11 percent died from dysentery (also a result of the lack of fresh water and the lack of good sanitation).

Overall, the average monthly death rate at Andersonville was 8.8 percent with an average population of 11,025 prisoners. Actually, only four months during the operation of the prison had death rates of over 10 percent. These were September, October, November 1864 and April 1865. The death rates were 32.9 percent, 36.7 percent, 36.2 percent, and 58.8 percent, respectively. The explanation for these extremely high rates is easy to see when General

Sherman is considered. In September 1864, when Sherman took Atlanta, the Confederate Army evacuated approximately two-thirds of the prison population. The population dropped from its high mark of 31,693 in August to only 8,218 by the end of September. Of those 8,200 remaining, most were simply too sick to make a long journey to Florence, North Carolina or other prisons. If most of the remaining prisoners are close to death to begin with, it stands to reason that a larger proportion of them will die, therefore raising the mortality rate for that month. This would also be true for the other three months mentioned.

According to the numbers collected during this study, Andersonville was not a unique case in and of itself. So, why was Wirz tried and executed? Because of the records kept at the prison, it can be determined that 19.9 percent of those who died were from the state of New York. Another 14 percent were from Pennsylvania. With this in mind, one reason for Wirz's trial and execution may be seen as a direct line between the number of dead New Yorkers and Pennsylvanians and the *New York Times* newspaper who wrote almost daily stories about Andersonville survivors and the Wirz trial.

In short, because Wirz misunderstood the surrender terms between Johnston and Sherman in South Carolina, he remained in close proximity of Andersonville while other commandants fled to Canada, Europe, and the western states. These made him easy to find, arrest, and confine. Also, because of the detailed records Wirz kept, the federal government had exact numbers that added significance to Wirz's prosecution. These two things are what hung

Captain Wirz on November 10, 1865. In reality, however, did the sentence fit his crimes? The statistics say no.

The only thing that can be said for sure is that no man likes his jailer and no matter how compassionate that jailer is, he is bound to be the object of scorn from his prisoners. This will always be true, no matter what circumstances exist.

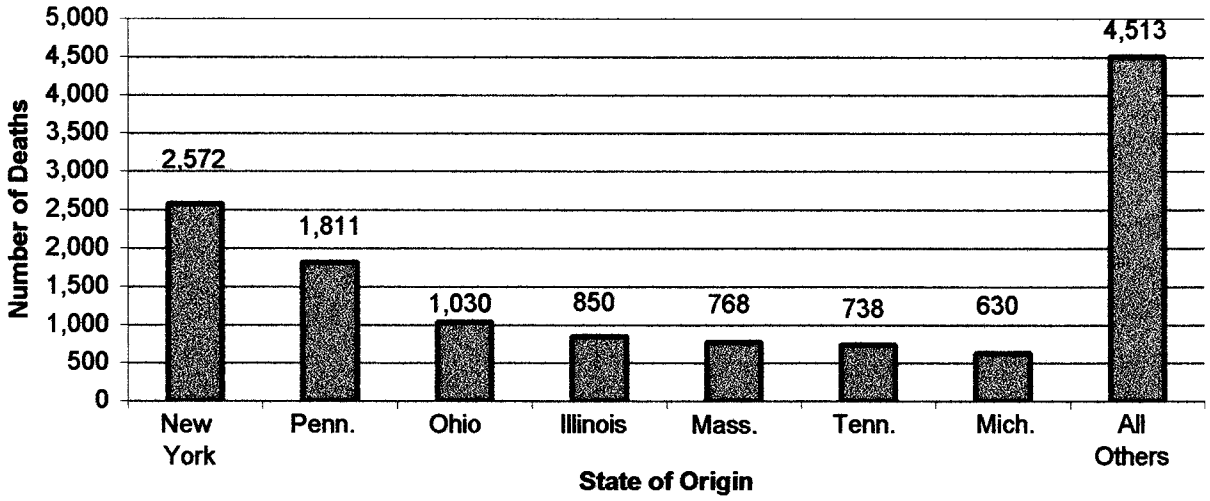
Appendix 1: Daily Record of Deaths at Andersonville Military Prison Pen

| Day: | 1864 | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. | May | June | July | Aug. | Sept. | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. | 1865 | Jan. | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | 1 | 27 | 19 | 18 | 49 | 74 | 105 | 81 | 25 | 6 | | 10 | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| 2 | | | 2 | 21 | 7 | 21 | 45 | 74 | 104 | 49 | 26 | 5 | | 6 | 6 | 2 | 0 |
| 3 | | | 1 | 21 | 27 | 30 | 43 | 74 | 112 | 41 | 28 | 5 | | 6 | 7 | 6 | 0 |
| 4 | | | 1 | 21 | 13 | 31 | 51 | 74 | 6 | 65 | 35 | 7 | | 5 | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| 5 | | | 7 | 27 | 29 | 27 | 42 | 90 | 97 | 46 | 33 | 4 | | 8 | 7 | 2 | 3 |
| 6 | | | 4 | 22 | 12 | 34 | 32 | 103 | 105 | 49 | 35 | 9 | | 7 | 8 | 8 | 0 |
| 7 | | | 6 | 16 | 22 | 25 | 60 | 71 | 64 | 54 | 22 | 6 | | 3 | 8 | 2 | 2 |
| 8 | | | 6 | 15 | 20 | 32 | 22 | 96 | 109 | 50 | 22 | 5 | | 6 | 8 | 6 | 1 |
| 9 | | | 3 | 23 | 19 | 35 | 41 | 93 | 77 | 35 | 13 | 5 | | 7 | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| 10 | | | 0 | 24 | 31 | 45 | 57 | 85 | 100 | 63 | 12 | 6 | | 5 | 11 | 2 | 1 |
| 11 | | | 4 | 9 | 21 | 28 | 38 | 103 | 98 | 105 | 13 | 2 | | 7 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| 12 | | | 3 | 27 | 17 | 30 | 54 | 81 | 111 | 75 | 11 | 12 | | 8 | 3 | 12 | 0 |
| 13 | | | 4 | 15 | 24 | 30 | 34 | 110 | 78 | 60 | 20 | 11 | | 5 | 10 | 8 | 0 |
| 14 | | | 3 | 27 | 26 | 55 | 57 | 113 | 102 | 78 | 13 | 4 | | 5 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| 15 | | | 5 | 19 | 29 | 80 | 42 | 120 | 83 | 23 | 22 | 6 | | 7 | 2 | 8 | 0 |
| 16 | | | 4 | 13 | 28 | 24 | 55 | 108 | 100 | 53 | 21 | 5 | | 9 | 7 | 3 | 2 |
| 17 | | | 4 | 20 | 21 | 56 | 66 | 113 | 106 | 46 | 16 | 3 | | 6 | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| 18 | | | 6 | 17 | 23 | 31 | 69 | 89 | 127 | 53 | 19 | 5 | | 6 | 3 | 6 | 1 |
| 19 | | | 9 | 17 | 24 | 49 | 50 | 101 | 92 | 55 | 10 | 5 | | 7 | 7 | 3 | 2 |
| 20 | | | 11 | 22 | 25 | 43 | 66 | 107 | 98 | 41 | 6 | 4 | | 6 | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| 21 | | | 10 | 10 | 21 | 49 | 67 | 86 | 107 | 40 | 9 | 3 | | 8 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| 22 | | | 11 | 15 | 21 | 42 | 63 | 122 | 37 | 51 | 16 | 3 | | 6 | 8 | 1 | 2 |
| 23 | | | 28 | 27 | 31 | 45 | 36 | 127 | 82 | 51 | 10 | 2 | | 7 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| 24 | | 0 | 12 | 15 | 29 | 50 | 69 | 102 | 77 | 67 | 12 | 7 | | 3 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| 25 | | 0 | 17 | 19 | 25 | 53 | 63 | 98 | 74 | 22 | 8 | 3 | | 3 | 0 | 5 | 2 |
| 26 | | 0 | 20 | 19 | 25 | 53 | 63 | 98 | 74 | 22 | 8 | 3 | | 3 | 0 | 5 | 2 |
| 27 | | 1 | 1 | 15 | 18 | 45 | 71 | 93 | 83 | 40 | 9 | 6 | | 13 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 28 | | 0 | 18 | 24 | 28 | 45 | 80 | 89 | 75 | 37 | 9 | 2 | | 8 | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| 29 | | | 21 | 16 | 21 | 42 | 85 | 106 | 69 | 27 | 3 | 3 | | 4 | | 3 | 0 |
| 30 | | | 19 | 13 | 20 | 39 | 69 | 95 | 60 | 40 | 6 | 7 | | 6 | | 0 | 0 |
| 31 | | | 23 | | 45 | | 96 | 92 | | 27 | | 4 | | 6 | | 0 | |
| Monthly Total: | | 1 | 264 | 576 | 721 | 1187 | 1735 | 2987 | 2702 | 1546 | 492 | 158 | | 193 | 142 | 112 | 30 |
| Grand Total: | | 1 | 265 | 841 | 1562 | 2749 | 4484 | 7471 | 10173 | 11719 | 12211 | 12369 | | 12562 | 12704 | 12816 | 12846 |

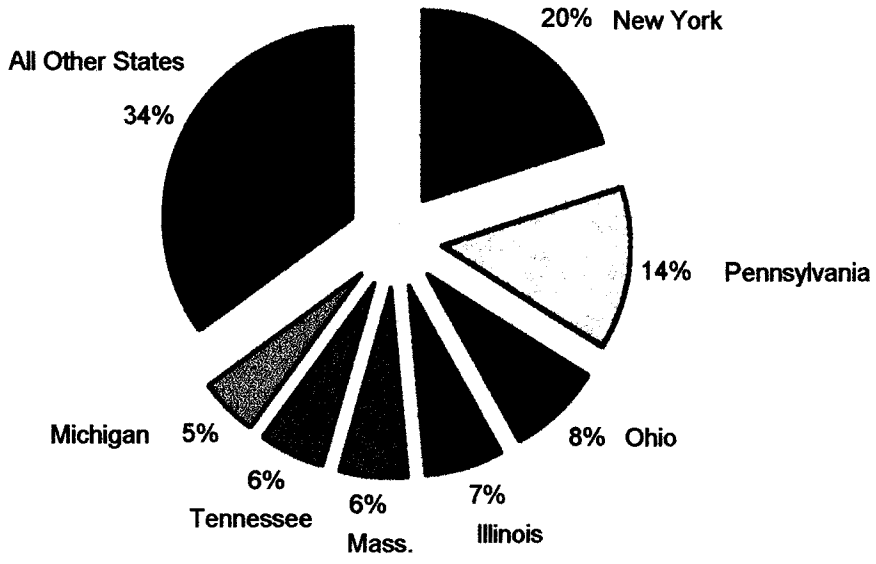
The total number of deaths was later revised to reflect the true number of deaths recorded to be 13,171.

Source: N.P. Chipman, *The Tragedy of Andersonville: Trial of Captain Henry Wirz, The Prison Keeper* (San Francisco: Chipman, 1911), 373.

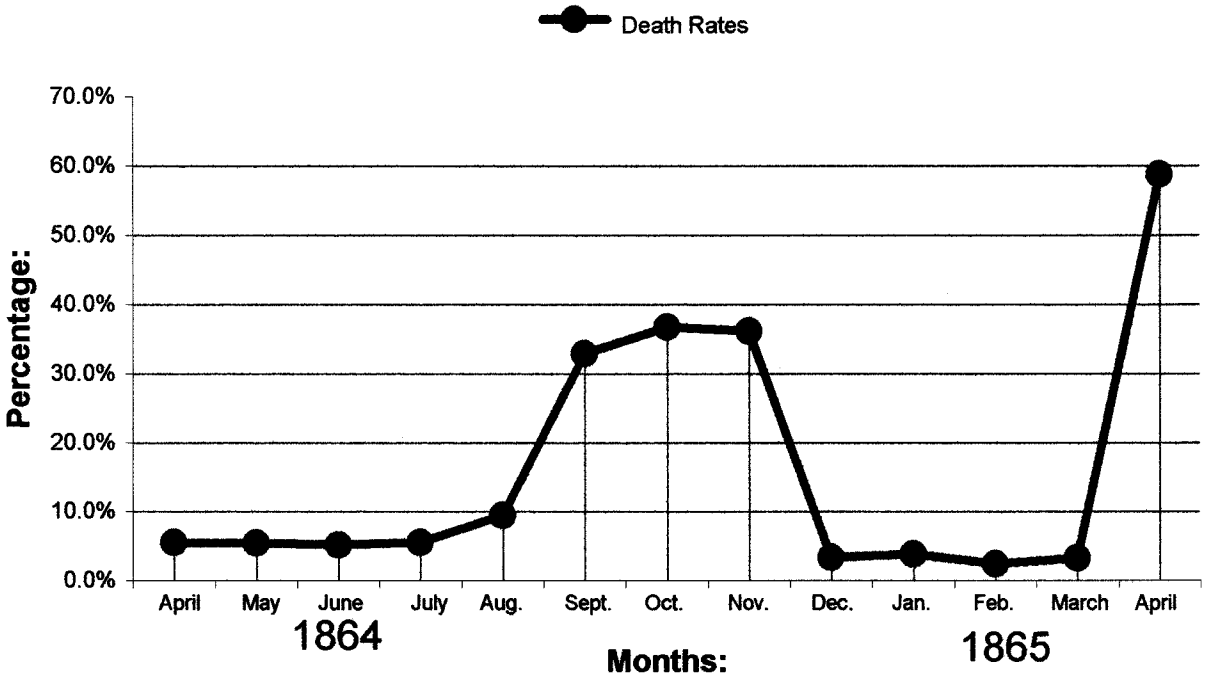
Appendix 2: Number of Deaths at Andersonville by State of Origin



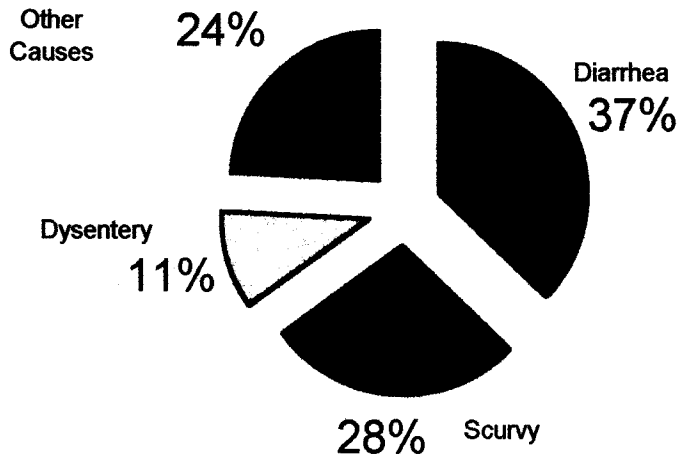

Appendix 3: Percentage Rates at Andersonville by State of Origin



Appendix 4: Andersonville Death Rates by Months Compared to Population of Prison Camp April 1864-April 1865




Appendix 5: Main Causes of Death at Andersonville



## Notes:

[1] N. P. Chipman, *The Tragedy of Andersonville: Trial of Captain Henry Wirz, The Prison Keeper.* (San Francisco: Chipman, 1911), 31. Also included on the courts martial commission were Brevet Major Generals G. Mott, L. Thomas, and J.W. Geary, Brigadier Generals Francis Fessenden and E.S. Bragg, and Brevet Brigadier Genera John F. Ballier.
[2] Ibid., 32-5.
[3] Ibid., 88.
[4] Ibid., 97. See also John Ransom, *John Ransom's Diary*, intro. Bruce Catton. (New York: P. S. Eriksson, 1963), 280.
[5] Chipman, 418-19.
[6] Ibid., 426.
[7] Daniel Patrick Brown, *The Tragedy of Libby and Andersonville Prison Camps* (Ventura: Golden West Historical Publications, 1995), 37.
[8] Ibid., 5.
[9] Ibid., 41.
[10] Lonnie Speer, *Portals to Hell: Military Prisons of the Civil War* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 1997), 13.
[11] Brown, 42.
[12] Ibid., 39-40.
[13] Speer, 15. See also Brown, 43.
[14] Ovid L. Futch, *History of Andersonville Prison* (Hialeah: University of Florida Press, 1968), 16-17.
[15] Speer, 10-11.
[16] Brown, 13.
[17] William B. Hesseltine, ed., *Civil War Prisons* (1931; reprint, Kent: Kent State University Press, 1972), 61.
[18] Ibid., 62 and 72.
[19] Ibid., 79.
[20] Speer, 126-7, 208, and 209.
[21] Ibid., 92-3 and 120.
[22] Frederick Augustus James, *Civil War Diary: Sumter to Andersonville*, ed. Jefferson J. Hammer (New Jersey: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1973), 341.
[23] Ibid., 273-275.
[24] Ibid., 31-3, 95, 209-10, and 285-6.
[25] Ibid., 255-7 and 258.
[26] Ibid., 9-10.
[27] Brown, 15.
[28] Ibid., 22.
[29] Hesseltine, 73.
[30] Ibid., 11. See also Futch.
[31] Speer, 32, 128, 210, 212, 213, 255-6, and 275.
[32] James, 340.
[33] Brown, 10.
[34] Speer, 31, 32, 126, 211.
[35] Ibid., 120-1.
[36] Hesseltine, 9. See also Futch.
[37] Speer, 274.
[38] Hesseltine, 8.
[39] Speer, 11.
[40] Brown, 13-4.
[41] Hesseltine, 72.

[42] Brown, 46-7.
[43] Ibid., 21.
[44] Chipman, 83-4. See also Ransom, 259-80. Testimony of Dr. Joseph Jones, Confederate States Army.
[45] Basile, Leon, ed. *The Civil War Diary of Amos E. Stearns, A Prisoner at Andersonville*. (East Brunswick: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1981), passim.
[46] Hesseltine, 73.
[47] Speer, 208.
[48] Ibid., 92.
[49] Ibid., 275.
[50] Ibid., 271.
[51] Ibid., 266.
[52] Brown, 52-3.
[53] Futch, 2. See also Chipman, 50.
[54] Tunnel traitors were prisoners who would inform the guards of plans for escapes for the possibility of receiving an extra ration of food for the information. If found out, these traitors would be dealt with, usually harshly by the other prisoners. A common form of punishment was to brand the tunnel traitor with the letters "TT" on their forehead so that other prisoners would recognize the hazards of discussing escape plans when in the company of such men.
[55] Ransom, 89-90.
[56] Speer, 296.
[57] Hesseltine, 6.
[58] Speer, XIV.
[59] Ibid., 295.
[60] Ibid., 12.
[61] Brown, 48.
[62] The number of dead at Andersonville has been argued by Chipman to be as high as 13,878. The number used here is the number used in the official trial transcripts of Captain Henry Wirz and it is also the number of marked graves at Andersonville National Cemetery in Andersonville, Georgia. Chipman, 369-376.
[63] J. H. Segars, ed., *Andersonville: The Southern Perspective* (Atlanta: Southern Heritage Press, 1995), 29-30. See also Hesseltine, 95; Chipman, 373-381.
[64] Chipman, 88; Speer, 14; Brown, 9.
[65] Speer, 14.
[66] Segars, 30.
[67] All tables from Segars, 29-30.
[68] Speer, 276.
[69] James, 325.
[70] Ibid., 128 and 207-9.
[71] Ibid., 257-8.
[72] Ibid., 211.
[73] Hesseltine, 60-1; and Brown, 11-2.
[74] Speer, 293.
[75] Ibid., 293.
[76] Ibid., 293.
[77] Ibid., 293.
[78] Ibid., 15.
[79] Chipman, 489.
[80] Speer, 293.

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